

WVU School of Journalism 2005 Snapshot  
*Strengths, Challenges Opportunities*

**GOAL #1 Attract and graduate high-quality students**

**A. Strengths**

- Our **Direct Admit program** allows us to recruit students with a higher high school GPA and test scores than pre-journalism students. Our direct admit student enrollment has increased 155% in the past six years. Preliminary research suggests that our direct admit students have a higher retention rate than our pre-journalism students.
- **Journalism 101** is a large introductory survey class that also serves to recruit new students to the program.
- We've completely revamped our **SOJ website** as a marketing and recruiting tool.
- Our **West Virginia High School Journalism Competition** attracts the best and brightest journalism students in the state. In 2005-2006, we've expanded the competition to include schools from Pennsylvania, Ohio, Maryland and Virginia.
- We've developed **new marketing materials**, including a recruitment video.
- We offer students a **hands-on curriculum, personalized attention** and opportunities to participate in **immersion journalism projects** that give students the opportunity to do professional work for real-world clients.

**B. Challenges**

- We face regional **competition** from other journalism programs, such as Ohio University that runs a well-established summer high-school journalism program. In addition, Marshall University has just moved its journalism program into a new building.
- **High school journalism in WV is on the decline** because of block scheduling and No-Child Left-Behind mandates.
- West Virginia faces a **decline in the high school population**.

**C. Opportunities**

- We should **actively recruit in Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania**, since we face little competition that market.
- We could create a **summer high school journalism boot camp**, to compete with Ohio University and generate excitement for our program across the region.
- **Scholarships could be used as a recruiting tool**. The School could offer substantial packages to freshman "stars," versus giving smaller awards to everyone who meets our minimum standards.
- We could **create packages** to attract high performing students, such as a 5-year Master's program.

**GOAL #2 Recruit and Retain High Faculty Committed to the Land Grant Mission**

**A. Strengths**

- We are a small school in a large university, in which **faculty have input** on decisions that impact the school.
- **Faculty are encouraged and supported** in their research and creative efforts.

- Faculty are given **autonomy** to teach their classes and make their schedules.
- Most faculty teach a majority of **small classes**.
- **Faculty and students work together** on immersion journalism projects that have an audience and an impact. These projects can also result in promotable work.
- Faculty are given **support to attend academic and professional conferences**.
- Faculty receive timely **technical and administrative support** from staff.
- Faculty are able to work with **up-to-date instructional technology**

## B. Challenges

- **Faculty Salaries** remain below the national average
- Our **faculty to student ratio is high**, and faculty carry a large teaching/advising/and service load.
- The university **lacks** the same **national reputation** as other institutions.
- The school **lacks a doctoral program**

## C. Opportunities

- The School can seek additional **enhanced/endowed professorships** to attract and retain the best and brightest faculty.
- The School can work with Central Administration to support **new faculty lines** in response to growing enrollment and productivity.
- We could move towards **group advising**, to reduce the advising burden for individual faculty, freeing up faculty to do more research and innovative teaching.
- We could **use our Extended Learning revenues** to update technology and offer research support/release time for productive faculty.
- We should **market our (non-financial) strengths** to prospective faculty
- Faculty should be encouraged to participate and **present at national academic/professional conferences**.

## GOAL #3 Enhance the Educational Environment for Students

### A. Strengths

- The school and institution have made significant **investments in technology and capital improvements**, including the purchase of new computers and software, renovations to the computer labs, Room 205 and the former TV studio, and the purchase of digital photography and broadcast equipment.
- The school emphasizes **experiential learning**. As part of their course work, students produce real work for real clients. Hands-on courses include: the newspaper bureau class, in which students write stories for WV and regional daily newspapers and the TV bureau class, in which students produce stories for KDKA News,
- The school is engaged in **convergence journalism projects** that give students invaluable opportunities to work in a variety of media doing long-form journalism that has impact and an audience. Such projects include the *Cancer Stories* book and documentary, the *West Virginia Veterans History Project*, and *Surviving the Storm* —an interactive website showcasing students' writing, photography, broadcast and multimedia reporting of Katrina evacuees in West Virginia.
- The school's **faculty** includes experienced professionals, who continue to practice what they teach. The faculty have received university, regional and national teaching awards.

## B. Challenges

- It is **expensive to maintain and replace technology**, particularly as formats change.
- With our growing enrollment and growing reliance on technology, we **need a full-time technology support staff person**, with knowledge of media programs.
- With our growing enrollment and new programs, we are **running out of space** in Martin Hall for additional instruction space and faculty offices.
- The **high student to faculty ratio** makes it difficult for teachers to spend quality time with students in and out of the classroom. In a small school, faculty have many demands on their time.

## C. Opportunities

- The school can **seek additional private support** (individual, foundation and corporate) to underwrite improvements in technology and renovations.
- The school can **better utilize the space** in Martin Hall to create a study space/lounge for students, and additional offices.
- The school can further **develop its convergence curricula**, to include more integration between the sequences, such as a course in visual journalism that will cut across the separate disciplines.
- The School could provide **more incentives to professors for teaching innovation**, such as awards, additional money, and course reductions.
- We can more effectively **market our capstone courses**, which offer students real world experience and professional opportunities.
- The school could use its journalism fee/EL revenues to **hire a full-time technology support person**.

## GOAL #4 Promote Discovery and Exchange of Knowledge and Ideas

### A. Strengths

- Our **online IMC Master's Program** is innovative and cutting edge, providing working professionals with a quality education in a new discipline.
- Our productive **faculty** conduct academic **research and creative activity**.
- Faculty and students work together on high-profile **immersion journalism projects**, such as the Cancer Project, Veteran's Project and Katrina Project.

### B. Challenges

- The **school lacks a doctoral program**, which could generate additional research and grant opportunities.
- The School's **on-campus Master's program** lacks faculty resources, a distinct curriculum and a clear focus.
- With a few exceptions, the school does **not emphasize cross-disciplinary research**, perhaps missing opportunities to partner with other units on campus.
- A **high faculty-to-student ratio** makes it difficult for faculty to take the extra time to work with students on research projects.

- The **school lacks a full-time development person**, who could help locate funding and write research grants.

### C. Opportunities

- With additional support, the school's **on-campus Master's program could be developed and enhanced** to become of the school's strengths.
- With additional support, the School could build on the success of IMC program, to **develop other online Master's programs**, such as Masters in Health Communications.
- The school could use its **Extended Learning revenues to provide research support** and release time for productive faculty. The school needs to continue to be entrepreneurial.
- The school could also use its **Extended Learning Revenues** to hire a grant writer either part- or full-time.
- The school could **partner with colleges that do get research dollars**, such as medicine and engineering, to develop interdisciplinary research projects.

## Goal #5 Improve West Virginia's Health, Economy & Quality of Life

### A. Strengths

- The school has engaged in **immersion journalism** and **service-learning projects** that benefit the citizens of the state, such as the Cancer Project, and Veterans Project.
- The school provides **outreach to news organizations** statewide. Faculty conduct professional development seminars for reporters, editors and photographers.
- Students in the **graduate course in Health Public Relations** conduct PR campaigns for non-profit groups, promoting health and wellness in the region.
- The school has a history of training students to produce **community-oriented journalism** and initiated several community journalism projects, such as the *Compass* newspaper in Scotts Run.

### B. Challenges

- The school **lacks resources** to donate considerable time/equipment to local news organizations and other community groups.
- The school **lacks a grant-writer** to develop funding to support outreach efforts.
- The school **does not reach out to other units on campus that have grants** for health projects with a communications/information component.

### C. Opportunities

- The school could **collaborate with other units** on campus to add a communications component to their grant-funded health projects.
- The school could **seek funding from national/regional media organizations** (WVPA and WVBA) to support outreach to state news organizations.
- The school could use EL funds/Institutional funds to **hire a grant writer**.

